

2262 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING  
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-0703  
(202) 225-3661

59 ELM STREET  
SECOND FLOOR  
NEW HAVEN, CT 06510  
(203) 562-3718

DURHAM/MIDDLEFIELD/MIDDLETOWN  
(860) 344-1159

WEBSITE: [HTTP://WWW.HOUSE.GOV/DELAURO](http://www.house.gov/delauro)



UNITED STATES  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ROSA L. DELAURO

3RD DISTRICT, CONNECTICUT

August 17, 2007

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COMMITTEE ON THE BUDGET

The Honorable Nancy A. Nord  
Acting Chairman  
U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission  
4330 East West Highway  
Bethesda, MD 20814

Dear Chairman Nord:

I am writing to express my concerns regarding the recent series of defective products manufactured in China and also to seek answers to some key questions on behalf of the American consumer and families.

Just this week, Mattel, the world's biggest toymaker, announced that its latest recall because of lead-based paint contamination of 1.5 million toys has been expanded by approximately 436,000 total lead-contaminated toys, 253,000 of which are in the United States. Moreover, in the last few months we have seen the recall of nearly 1 million units of popular Fisher-Price toys (including popular Elmo, Ernie, and Dora the Explorer figurines) and 1.5 million units of Thomas & Friends trains and accessories—all because of lead paint.

Given there have been 44 toy recalls this year, these latest recalls merely highlight the need for the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) to institute more stringent product safety requirements for imported products. Even more so considering a disproportionate amount of these products are being manufactured in China—where safety precautions are basically non-existent.

Although I am disappointed at the length of time it has taken your agency to pursue serious discussions to bolster product safety regulations, I am pleased to hear that you are working with the Toy Industry Association to make safety testing mandatory for all toy products. I ask that you share the developments of these deliberations, and in addition, I would appreciate responses to the following questions:

- Why has it taken this long to pursue a requirement for toy safety testing?
- What are the details of this requirement?
- Being cognizant of the different vendors involved with producing any one toy, will safety standards extend to all of the components and ingredients used?

Furthermore, as a member of the Appropriations Committee, I was proud to increase funding for the CPSC in the Financial Services Appropriations bill that recently passed the House. As you know, the legislation includes \$66.8 million for FY 2008, which is \$4.11 above last year's allocation and \$3.588 more than the president's budget request. In what ways will your agency use this nearly 7 percent increase in funding to strengthen product safety?

Like you, I believe that safety should always be a number one priority. We need to be able to trust the safety of the toys in the hands of our children. Thank you for your attention to this matter. I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

  
Rosa L. DeLauro  
Member of Congress